



Community Visioning Workshop  
October 13, 2007  
9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Prepared by:



## *introduction*

*Envision San Jose 2040*, the update to the 2020 San Jose General Plan, will provide a unique opportunity to look at our city, and determine where we are now, and where we want to go in the future. The General Plan, once adopted, will guide development and city services for the next 20 to 30 years. The City of San Jose's process is guided by the 37 member *Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force* appointed by the City Council.



City Hall Rotunda, before the meeting

## *process and methodology*

Over 250 residents and business and organizational representatives attended the *Envision San Jose 2040 Community Visioning Workshop* on Saturday, October 13, 2007, from 9:30 am -12:30 pm at San Jose City Hall. The participants reflected the diversity of the city's population, and included substantive participation by members of the Youth Commission and other active teens. To make the discussion accessible to San Jose's community, the large group portions of the workshop were simultaneously



Participants at the start of the workshop

translated from English into Spanish and Vietnamese. The small group discussions occurred in all three languages, with the addition of a group speaking in Cantonese. In total, there were thirty breakout groups, each of which contributed to the discussion.

Participants enthusiastically expressed their dreams and aspirations for San Jose's future. The comments and feedback from the *Envision San Jose 2040* event will be combined with the results from past and future outreach activities to create a comprehensive vision for San Jose.

The three-hour workshop brought participants together to hear from city leaders and to learn about the General Plan process. The day began with a welcome from Mayor Chuck Reed, who thanked participants for helping make the *Envision San Jose 2040* process a success. The Mayor encouraged participants to help build a grand vision for the future of San Jose, one that will inspire future generations. He shared the following comments from former Mayor Ernie Renzel, who recently passed away at the age of 100:



Participants in Council Chambers.

“We are blessed to live in this area with great beauty combined with a robust economy. We must plan carefully for the land remaining under our stewardship so that this good fortune is preserved and enhanced. With appropriate care and planning, San Jose and Santa Clara Valley will have a bright future and will remain one of the most beautiful places on Earth.”

Task Force Co-Chairs, Councilmember Sam Liccardo and Shirley Lewis, and Vice-Chair David Pandori welcomed and thanked everyone for coming out on a Saturday to participate in the important discussions on the future of their city. Vice-Chair David Pandori acknowledged the members of the *Envision San Jose 2040 Task Force* appointed by the City Council to work with City Staff to guide the General Plan update process.

Community members then watched a short video that explained the context and importance of the General Plan update.

After the welcome and introduction, participants broke into small groups and were asked to discuss three questions to help create a vision statement for San Jose.

1. What do you like best about San Jose?
2. What are the key citywide issues, opportunities and priorities that should be addressed over the next 20 to 30 years?
3. What would make San Jose a great city 20 to 30 years into the future?

The answers and ensuing discussion were recorded on flip charts. After answering the questions, the groups reviewed their discussions and recorded their most important points on summary sheets.

Workshop participants reconvened as a large group, and volunteer reporters from each group shared key points.

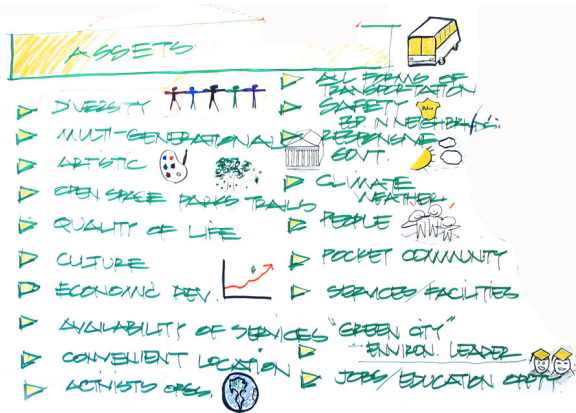
The day would not have been a success without the hard work and enthusiasm of the 50 volunteers from San Jose State University, multiple City departments and outside agencies who facilitated and recorded the small group sessions. Additionally, the City worked closely with community groups to spread the word about the event.



Responses were recorded on flip charts  
Photo by Kymerli W Brady

## ***key strengths, challenges and opportunities***

In order to plan for the future, it is important to know what is working for San Jose today and what needs to be changed. The answers to the three small group discussion questions were sorted and analyzed to learn what community members thought were San Jose's strengths, challenges and opportunities. For instance, the question, "What do you like best about San Jose?" provided information about many of San Jose's strengths.



Strengths, or assets, as captured on the wall graphic

### ***Strengths***

Participants identified many strong assets in San Jose, including the city's rich heritage, small-city feel, cultural and ethnic diversity, and strong social fabric. The city's economic opportunities were furthermore identified as an asset, and the city was viewed as one of the world's hubs of innovation.

San Jose community members said that they appreciate the area's great weather and the many open spaces, parks, gardens, and trails nearby. Residents also said that they enjoyed the city's convenient location in the Silicon Valley, its proximity to major freeways, and its diverse transit services, which connect San Jose to the rest of the region. The Mineta San Jose International Airport was also identified as an asset.

Participants lauded the City's many innovative programs, including the Strong Neighborhoods Initiative and "Smart Start." They also mentioned the availability of public services within the city. The growing, walkable downtown was also identified as an asset.

Community members stated that they value the responsive and open government. They said they also enjoy the diversity of San Jose's neighborhoods, and appreciate recent City investment in the downtown and residential areas. Many neighborhoods are clean, beautiful and safe, and participants would like to see these qualities throughout the city.

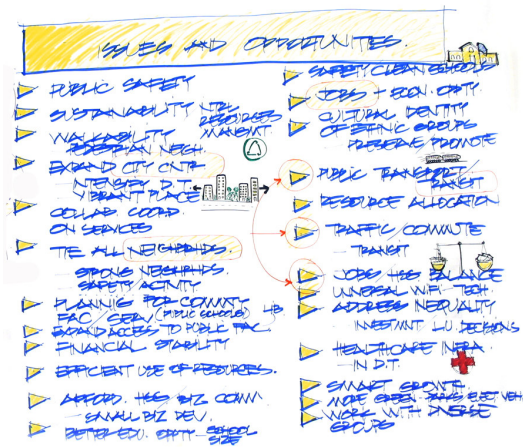
Participants also said that they appreciate their neighbors; San Jose residents are actively involved, are friendly and are proud of their neighborhoods. The availability of many places of worship, for a diversity of faiths, was identified as an additional asset.

Participants said that the city's great libraries, schools, parks, cultural resources and events, and recreation programs contribute to the family-friendly environment and attract a diverse and well-educated populace. Participants felt that San Jose is at the forefront of the green movement.



Participants liked many things about San Jose  
*Photo by Kymberli W Brady*





Issues (or challenges) and opportunities, as captured on the wall graphic

## Challenges

Traffic and the cost of housing were two issues that concerned residents. Additionally, some workshop participants commented that public transportation is not reliable.

Participants identified the sprawling auto-oriented character of the city as an issue that will need to be addressed if the city is going to become more environmentally sustainable. Making the city more pedestrian friendly was identified as a specific challenge.

Global warming was identified as a significant issue, and how the City will successfully reduce its emissions of green house gases, as a challenge. Furthermore, providing enough water to meet the future demand of residents and business was identified as a challenge.

While participants generally did not see crime as a major problem, they had the perception that it was increasing, and that worried them. Residents also felt that the city lacked a clear and unique identity.

Participants identified the need to continue to provide support to older neighborhoods, including support for efforts to reduce blight in these communities.

The inaccessibility to health care concerned some groups and the need to improve health services for everyone was identified.

Some groups mentioned that the City's budget deficit and fiscal imbalance is an important issue that needs to be addressed if the City is going to maintain its existing level of facilities and services as the city grows. In addition, the growing economic inequality between people in different levels of the economic spectrum was identified as an important issue.



Groups discussed challenges or issues  
Photo by Kymberli W Brady

Participants were concerned that schools were not receiving adequate funding and stressed the importance of a high quality education system.

Some groups identified the need for more community centers for youth and adult activities and educational opportunities.

Overcrowding as a result of a growing city was a concern of some participants.

A number of participants also said that the location of the Mineta San Jose International Airport was as a constraint.

Many participants stressed the need to achieve a balance between the number of jobs in the city and the number of housing units, and then stressed the importance of retaining land for the growth of the city's economy. Keeping existing businesses, and facilitating the growth of existing and new industries in San Jose, was seen as critical to the overall health of the city.

### ***Opportunities***

Workshop participants were excited about San Jose's future.

They believe the city is poised to become a tourist destination. Promoting events that are already happening is one easy way to help make this happen. Additionally, large gathering areas could provide an opportunity for hosting large events like the Olympics.

Many expressed, with great enthusiasm, the need to grow consistent with Smart Growth principles. Community members believe that the city can become a national leader in the environmental movement with green policies, green companies and green buildings.



Working groups in the Rotunda

*Photo by Kymberli W Brady*

THE SUN JOE  
THE FIELD //

- PROMOTING ECON VIABILITY
- STRENGTHEN EXISTING COMMUNITY
- BALANCE OPEN SPACE
- GROWST CITY EMPLOYMENT
- MORE OPEN SPACE
- RESTORATION WITH GREAT PLACES
- SMALL TOWN CHARACTER
- CITY FOR KIDS
- MORE CULTURAL PLACES
- LANDMARK IDENTITY
- CELEBRATE DIVERSITY
- MORE EXISTING PLACES
- MORE NEIGHBORHOOD DT CENTERS
- BUILT ON ASSETS
- GREEN LEADER
- TOURISM DESTINATION
- PROMOTION EVENTS
- PROVIDE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
- MODERN URBAN SUSTAINABILITY
- BUILT ON ASSETS

One of the primary purposes of the workshop was to create the building blocks of a vision statement. The elements of the vision statement presented here were taken from answers to the three discussion questions. In particular, the question, “What would make San Jose a great city 20 to 30 years into the future?” provided much insight about the vision of residents.

While the vision statement for San Jose will continue to develop as the City conducts additional outreach activities, important elements are presented below.

### *Unique community character and identity*

- San Jose offers the best of a big city and a small town.
- Residents are proud of the city, its unique character and history. There is a distinct city-wide identity.
- The city celebrates its diverse cultures.
- San Jose achieves cultural, social and economic equality.
- The high quality of life in San Jose is a model for other cities.



- San Jose is a great place to raise children.
- San Jose is forward-looking, but values the past.
- The city has many cultural amenities that serve visitors and residents alike.
- San Jose is the ‘capital’ of the Silicon Valley and is known worldwide as a center for innovation and creativity.
- Additional major league sports teams are located in San Jose.
- The City has great regional park and recreation facilities, including a “Riverwalk,” similar to the one in San Antonio, Texas, and a Central Park.

***Strong neighborhoods and a healthy downtown***

- People from all cultures and backgrounds feel at home.
- People are generous, kind and friendly to one another.
- The city is a great place to grow up and grow old.
- San Jose is clean and beautiful.
- There are healthy, strong neighborhoods with distinct local characters.
- Community members have pride in their neighborhoods.
- Residential areas are quiet and peaceful.
- Downtown is vibrant and full of positive activity.
- Neighborhood retail options are spread throughout the city, with a scale and character appropriate to the surrounding community.
- New architecture is innovative and historic buildings and historic resources are preserved.
- Infill development fits in with and strengthens existing neighborhoods.
- Streets, parks and neighborhoods are safe and walkable.

***A vibrant, innovative economy...***

- A strong economy, driven by innovative companies, provides economic opportunity for all.
- San Jose is a high tech leader.
- Tourist attractions ensure that San Jose is a destination.
- The city government and local businesses work together as partners.
- There is a balance between jobs and housing units.
- There is a balance between work and family.

***A leader in smart and sustainable growth...***

- San Jose is a more urban city with jobs and amenities near housing.
- The city has multiple vibrant neighborhood centers or mini-downtowns that meet the daily needs of surrounding residents.
- There are many housing options, affordable to the community.
- Parks and green spaces are plentiful and spread throughout the city.

***Multiple transportation options...***

- Reliable and regular public transit offers a viable method of getting around the city and to regional destinations. BART connects San Jose to the rest of the Bay Area.
- Bike paths crisscross the city.
- San Jose is a pedestrian-friendly city that encourages walking.
- Residents are not dependent on the automobile to get around because the city is not auto-oriented.
- Traffic flows smoothly on the roads.

***Quality city government and services...***

- Public participation is valued and there are multiple opportunities to become involved in civic activities. Residents are engaged and empowered.
- San Jose provides a broad range of services in cooperation with nonprofits, schools, the County and the State.
- The City government is responsive and transparent.
- San Jose is fiscally sound and can provide the services, infrastructure and facilities needed by its residents.
- Health services are available to all residents.

***An excellent education system...***

- World-class schools provide education to San Jose's youth.
- Modern technology is found throughout the schools.
- There are high quality vocational training opportunities, which are provided in partnership with local businesses.
- Adult education is available for all who want it.

***Environmental leadership...***

- Parks, gardens, trails and other green space provide opportunities for all types of recreation.
- San Jose is a model of sustainability and a leader in green technology.
- Green buildings are the norm.
- San Jose residents are careful stewards of resources. As the city grows, it does not consume more.

***next steps***

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The information from the Community Visioning Workshop will be combined with input obtained at the winter/spring 2007 community outreach events and the *Envision San Jose Task Force* meetings. All of this feedback will be used to create a vision statement and guide the development of the *Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan*. The ultimate goal is to have a general plan which reflects the values, goals and vision of San Jose's residents.



## ASSETS

- ▷ DIVERSITY
- ▷ MULTI-GENERATIONAL
- ▷ ARTISTIC
- ▷ OPEN SPACE PARKS TRAILS
- ▷ QUALITY OF LIFE
- ▷ CULTURE
- ▷ ECONOMIC DEV.
- ▷ AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES "GREEN CITY"
- ▷ CONVENIENT LOCATION
- ▷ ACTIVISTS
- ▷ ALL FORMS OF TRANSPORTATION
- ▷ SAFETY
- ▷ RESILIENT GOVT.
- ▷ CLIMATE
- ▷ PEOPLE
- ▷ POCKET COMMUNITY
- ▷ SERVICES FACILITIES
- ▷ "GREEN CITY"
- ▷ ENVIRON. LEADER
- ▷ JOBS/ EDUCATION



## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- ▷ PUBLIC SAFETY
- ▷ SUSTAINABILITY
- ▷ VARIABILITY
- ▷ EXPAND CITY CAPT.
- ▷ COLLAB. COORD. ON SERVICES
- ▷ TIE ALL NEIGHBORHOODS
- ▷ PLANNING FOR COMMUNITY
- ▷ EXPAND ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRAIL
- ▷ FINANCIAL STABILITY
- ▷ EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES
- ▷ AFFORD. HOUSING
- ▷ RETAINED. COMM. SIDE
- ▷ SAFETY/CLIMATE/EDUCATION
- ▷ JOBS + ECON. GROWTH
- ▷ CULTURAL IDENTITY
- ▷ PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION
- ▷ RESOURCE ALLOCATION
- ▷ TRAFFIC/COMMUTE
- ▷ JOBS/HOUSING BALANCE
- ▷ ADDRESS NEIGHBORHOOD
- ▷ HEALTHCARE INFRA.
- ▷ SMART GROWTH
- ▷ MORE GREEN SPACE
- ▷ WORK WITH INCREASE GROUPS